



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Group

• Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation GM Monthly Report

Summary

Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Office July 2024 Monthly Activities

Purpose

To report on Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Office July 2024 Monthly Activities

Detailed Report

SRI Core Activities

This month, SRI onboarded two new key staff – Carolyn Schaffer as the Sustainability and Resilience Section Manager and Leticia Guzman as SRI Administrative Assistant II. At the One Water Committee, SRI worked with WRM to bring academic partners from Chico State to discuss pilot projects in the Palo Verde Valley on innovative agricultural practices related to water efficiency and carbon sequestration. With the CAMP4W Planning team, SRI helped facilitate the CAMP4W Task Force focused on Signposts, Adaptive Management and Time-Bound Targets and is now working with the team and Member Agencies on evaluative criteria refinement.

Sustainability and Resilience

Sustainability and Resilience Operating Policies (OPs): SRI is currently working on three Metropolitan OPs:

1. G-05, Procurement of Goods and Services is being revised to incorporate a new Sustainable Procurement Guide.
2. G-06, Sustainable Procurement, is a new OP that establishes Metropolitan's commitment to procuring sustainable goods and services, supports sustainability priorities outlined in the Climate Action Plan, and facilitates compliance with environmental laws and regulations.
3. D-03, Sustainability, and Resilience establishes policy and guidance for advancing Metropolitan's sustainability and resilience goals and initiatives and is currently in review by the Legal Department.

Water Utilities Climate Alliance (WUCA) Presentation: On July 15, SRI and the Fleet Services staff conducted a presentation on Metropolitan's transition to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) for WUCA. Metropolitan presenters shared challenges and lessons learned as it continues its journey to electrify its fleet.

ZEV Feasibility Study: SRI submitted a Letter of Commitment to participate in a Department of Energy (DOE) grant-funded feasibility study for fleet electrification with the National Electric Highway Coalition (NEHC), a non-profit agency. One of the grant recipients is Everengi, a consulting firm that will provide Metropolitan and other utilities access to fleet transition planning software.

Centralized Grants Management Office

An updated Grants Procedures manual is currently in final review with Legal, Audit, Finance, and Procurement. Upon completion, the updated manual will be disseminated and posted on the IntraMet. The Centralized Grants Management Office has also developed a six-part Grants Administrator training series that will walk and guide staff through the updated manual. The training and certification will be available on MyLearning.

Date of Report: August 19, 2024

Environmental Planning Services

Core Business: Environmental Planning and Regulatory Compliance Support

Environmental Planning Section staff continued to prepare California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation for capital projects. The public review periods closed for the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declarations for the West Valley Feeder No. 1 Stage 3 Improvements and the Inland Feeder/Foothill Pump Station Intertie projects, as well as the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Garvey Reservoir Rehabilitation Project. Staff also continued to prepare the draft Program EIR for Pure Water Southern California, including reviewing draft technical reports for air quality/greenhouse gas, water quality, and traffic. Staff conducted construction monitoring for PCCP Second Lower Feeder Reach 3B Rehabilitation, Perris Valley Pipeline Interstate 215, Lake Mathews Valve Storage Building, La Verne Shops Upgrades, Weymouth Basins 5 through 8 Rehabilitation, and Weymouth Asphalt Rehabilitation projects, and the Colorado River Aqueduct Structural Protection Program. Staff continued to prepare CEQA environmental documentation and supported a public meeting for the Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project.



Construction Monitoring along the Perris Valley Pipeline

Critical operations and maintenance activities were supported by Environmental Planning Section staff, including providing CEQA and regulatory clearances, conducting pre-construction and nesting bird surveys, and construction monitoring support for operations and maintenance activities throughout the service area. Staff continued to actively participate in coordination and planning meetings for the Foothill Feeder shutdown.



Southern Coast Mallow observed at Mud Canyon during fieldwork along the Lower Feeder

Environmental Planning Section continued oversight of reserve management activities to protect valuable natural resources and meet Metropolitan's mitigation obligations. Security patrols were conducted throughout both reserves to prevent trespassing, vandalism, poaching, and theft and to protect the reserves' natural and cultural resources, facilities, and equipment. Activities at the Lake Mathews Multiple Species Reserve included coordinating with CalFire for the Fire Investigator Training test burn plots, allowing CalFire staff to gain experience identifying ignition sources, burn direction, and other fire indicators. Activities at the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve included removal of non-native plants for fire and habitat management, coordinating with researchers conducting burrowing owl, grasshopper sparrow, and Stephens' kangaroo rat surveys, and maintaining invasive brown-headed cowbird traps.

Land Management

A new lease has been executed with the existing Palo Verde tenant, Joey Deconinck Farms. The lease was approved by Metropolitan's Board in September 2023 for a new term of up to 16 years with rent terms to enhance water conservation incentives that mirror the existing rent terms included in the current leases with the original, legacy Palo Verde tenants.

A new lease has been granted to the existing Bay Delta tenant, Lemhi Land and Cattle, LLC, for a term of up to 16 years. The lease was approved by Metropolitan's Board in March 2024 to support rice farming on Holland Tract, which should lead to land subsidence benefits and other ecological improvements.

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Southern California Edison (SCE) has been issued an entry permit for the placement of electrical infrastructure underground near Lake Matthews. The permit will help facilitate SCE's wildfire mitigation project.

AECOM and Brown and Caldwell are engineering and project management consultants assisting with Metropolitan's Pure Water Project. Accordingly, a lease has been entered into for said consultants to occupy approximately 3,000 square feet of office space at Metropolitan's headquarters for up to five years.